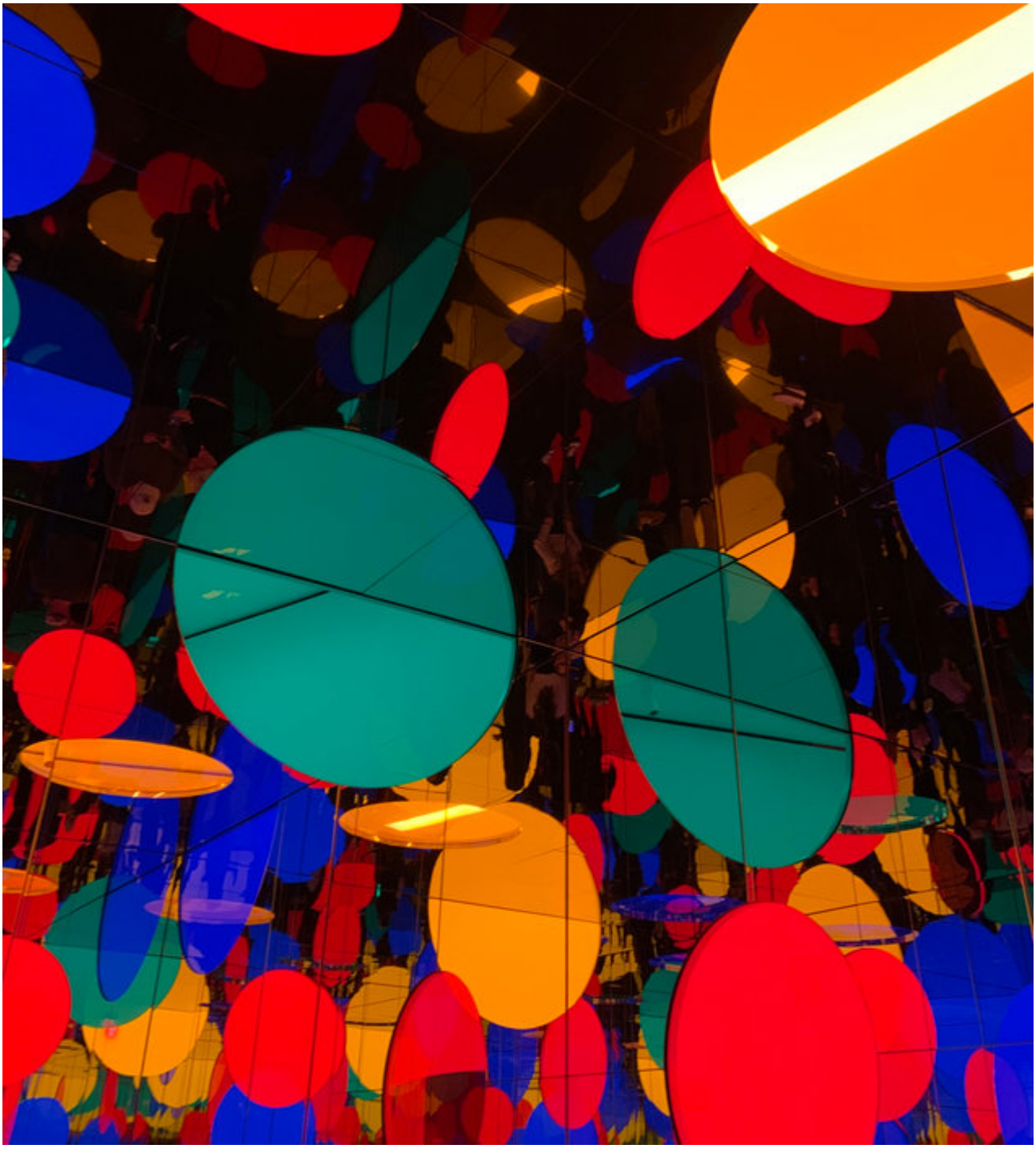
Countdown to Tofurkey Day!

Numismagram Newsletter #110 (XI/2023)



Last Monday, my wife and I took a day trip to visit SFMOMA in order to view, among other things, the Yayoi Kusama installations. Her immersive, transfixing, and somewhat disorienting cubes, *large enough for groups of just six museum goers at a time*, combine intense color and all-encompassing mirrors to create seemingly infinite reflections. Given the overall idea of spreading love and joy, this concept is reinforced in a brief two-minute setting that is both tranquil and sensory-overloading at the same time. Above is the first installation, along with its vibrant polka dots, while below is the second installation, this time with more of a neon color palette and black polka dots populating various wavy stalagmite and stalactite-inspired tendrils, each varying in its projected hue...

Given all of this intense color, it makes sense that the first medal in this upload would be an iridescent toner...

While this may not exactly be the most flattering portrait of Sir Winston Churchill (*such a flattering portrait may not be possible*), one cannot overlook the vibrant colors that are present on the obverse. What's more, one can easily be reminded of the Kusama installations from above and their endless use of the round polka dot, as round is certainly something that comes to mind with this particular portrait of the former statesman and prime minister.

Speaking of the famous wartime leader, one also cannot overlook Veterans Day this past Saturday, marking the 105th anniversary of the end of World War I. Medallic art played a very large role in the depiction and portrayal of the war by many of the countries involved, as did its aftermath...

This wondrous Art Deco plaque captures the sentiments of the time along with one of the dominant contemporary art movements. Here, a laureate angel is caressing a fallen soldier—his name lost to time, but his sacrifice nevertheless remembered through this imagery.

Staying with the theme of World War I in medallic art, here is a fairly rare and dazzling silver medal alluding to the use of the "*u-Boot*," or German submarine...

Graded PCGS SP-64, it features a Giant (Poseidon?) wielding a club, fending off Triton attacking with a spear from below the sea. In this piece, the artist is comparing the new, stealthy submarine as clearly the tool to wrestle away sea-faring dominance from Great Britain. And speaking of maritime dominance, here is a stunning “trapunto” painted tapestry from the exhibit of Pacita Abad’s enchanting works, part of one of the other installations currently on view at SFMOMA...

Recently, while at a local wine merchant, I noticed a bottle with the name “Escudo Real.” My first thought was that this was a mixing of two coining denominations by someone who likely didn’t know what they were doing—*escudos being the gold denomination throughout Spain and her colonial empire, and reales being the silver*. I had the idea that I would get a bottle of this to enjoy and to introduce the next medal, thinking that it may be French and the “Escudo Real” name would tie-in to Mexico. It turns out that this brand is actually Portuguese, making it even more confusing, and meaning that none of the tie-ins work. In any event, here’s the medal...

This very large and impressive French medal celebrates a brief and intriguing period in 1838 that saw French naval forces blockade and capture some important coastal ports in Mexico, all as a part of the so-called “Pastry War.” More details can be found in this item’s description, and it wouldn’t be the last time in which the French would play a role in the affairs of Mexico.

Lastly, here’s a medal perfect for the upcoming holiday...

One of the earlier issues under the Society of Medalists, it features a turkey and corn—what could be more holiday appropriate? Well, *at least for us*, it will be a vegan loaf sans the turkey, but there will still be corn.

For all of this upload's new items, please click **here** or on the banner art below. We will be back again at the beginning of December with another great mix of art and historical medals. Also, due to some traveling for work, any orders placed between today and Monday the 20th will ship on Tuesday the 21st.

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